

# Safe Church Foundations (Ministry Agent) Handout

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C2.1.5	<a href="#">Obligations of Ministry Agents</a>	C2.1.2.7.1	<a href="#">List of Acceptable Behaviours.</a>
C2.1.5.1	<a href="#">Ministry Agent Statement of Commitment.</a>	C2.1.2.7.2	<a href="#">List of Unacceptable Behaviours.</a>
C2.1.10.4	<a href="#">Obligations of retired Ministry Agents who are volunteering or available for supply.</a>	C2.1.5.3	<a href="#">Mandatory Reporting Process for Ministry Agents.</a>
C2.1.5.2	<a href="#">Blue Card Requirements of Ministry Agents.</a>	C2.1.2.12	<a href="#">Mandatory Reporting Process for Lay</a>
C2.1.2.11	<a href="#">Blue Card Requirements of Lay Preachers. Consent to discuss Information (Blue Card)</a>	C2.1.5.8	<a href="#">Resource Reporting and Referral Guide.</a>

**WARNING – The information in this document may be confronting and includes topics about abuse, neglect and exploitation. Please continue to look after your own wellbeing and seek support if you need it.**

## Safe Church – Safe People – Safe Behaviour – Safe Programs – Safe Participants

Obligations of Ministry Agents	Legislative and Policy Frameworks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policy compliance.</li> <li>Training.</li> <li>Governance.</li> <li>Mandatory Reporting.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>National Child Safe Framework.</li> <li>Working with Children (Risk Management and Screening) Act and Regulation.</li> </ul>
8 Minimum Requirements (Legislation)	Child and Youth Risk Management Strategy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Statement of Commitment.</li> <li>Code of Conduct.</li> <li>Written procedures for managing volunteers (selecting, training, managing volunteers).</li> <li>Policies and procedures on disclosures and reporting abuse etc.</li> <li>A plan for managing breaches of risk management strategy.</li> <li>Risk management plans for high-risk activities and special events.</li> <li>Policies and procedures for managing Blue Card compliance.</li> <li>Strategies for communication and support.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Required for Ministry Agents with a stipend or available for supply (due to Covenantal Relationship).</li> <li>Achieved by signing the Ministry Agent Statement of Commitment, endorsing the Safe Church Policy.</li> <li>Copy sent to Presbytery and Church Council (to upload in Safe Church Audit).</li> </ul>
Blue Cards – Ministry Agents (no stipend)	
<b>Roles Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Volunteer (e.g. lay pastor or lay preacher).</li> <li>Employee (paid a <b>wage</b> not a stipend).</li> <li>Retired Ministry Agents not available for supply, but active in Congregation or considered a Religious Representative in the community.</li> </ul>	<b>Blue Card Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must hold a Blue Card.</li> <li>Link Blue Card to every organisation you work or volunteer.</li> <li>New applications: list Presbytery Chair as contact person in 'organisation's contact person' section.</li> </ul>
Blue Cards – Ministry Agents (stipend)	
<b>Role Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Covenantal relationship.</li> <li>Receive a stipend.</li> <li>Available for supply or placement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Determined as 'conducting your own regulated business as a religious representative' due to the Covenantal relationship.</b></p>	<b>Blue Card Details:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must hold a <b>Business</b> Blue Card.</li> <li>Link Card to <b>Synod</b> and every organisation connected to.</li> <li>Complete 'consent to discuss information' form.</li> <li>New applications: list General Secretary as contact person in 'organisation's contact person' section.</li> </ul>

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The Uniting Church in Australia  
QUEENSLAND SYNOD

<p><b>Shared Guardianship</b></p> <p><i>All people, including children, are made in the image of God. As a Christian community we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance, and that our relationships with each other should express love, care and respect.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive, respectful culture in which <b>everyone</b> plays an important role.</li> <li>• Support everyone to foster a safe and nurturing environment where everyone can flourish.</li> </ul>	<p><b>List of Acceptable &amp; Unacceptable Behaviours</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical, emotional, behavioural and spiritual boundaries.</li> <li>• Complete lists available on the Hub.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Abuse = Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Sexual</li> <li>• Neglect</li> </ul>	<p><b>Harm = Impact</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical</li> <li>• Emotional</li> <li>• Physical</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical Abuse</b></p> <p>Non-accidental use of physical force against another individual which results in harm (Whether harm is intended or not).</p>	<p><b>Emotional Abuse</b></p> <p>Pattern of behaviour that intentionally undermines, manipulates, or controls another person's emotions, thoughts, beliefs or actions.</p>
<p><b>Neglect</b></p> <p>Failure by a parent or caregiver to provide a young or vulnerable person with the conditions that are culturally accepted in a society as being essential for physical and emotional development and wellbeing.</p>	<p><b>Financial Abuse</b></p> <p>Domestic or interpersonal abuse where one individual exerts control over another person's financial resources, assets, debts, or financial decision-making to gain power and control over them.</p>
<p><b>Sexual Abuse</b></p> <p>Unwanted or non-consensual activity or behaviour that is forced upon an individual against their will or without consent.</p>	<p><b>Social Abuse</b></p> <p>Deliberate act of isolating an individual or group of individuals from social interactions and relationships as a form of mistreatment or harm.</p>
<p><b>Spiritual Abuse</b></p> <p>Misuse or manipulation of religious or spiritual beliefs, practices, or teachings to control, manipulate, or harm individuals or groups.</p>	<p><b>Domestic and Family Violence</b></p> <p>A family member, partner or ex-partner, or other household member attempts to physically or psychologically dominate the other.</p>
<p><b>Indicators of Sexual Abuse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent, recurring nightmares, bedwetting or soiling clothing.</li> <li>• Unexplained injury to sexual body parts.</li> <li>• Hints about sexual activity or sexual knowledge beyond child's age or developmental stage.</li> <li>• Overly sexualized behaviour / play / themes in artwork.</li> <li>• Refusing to talk about 'secrets'</li> <li>• Unexplained gifts or money</li> <li>• Recurring themes of power / control in play</li> <li>• Sudden behavioural shifts</li> </ul>	<p><b>Grooming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deliberate actions with aim of befriending and establishing an emotional connection.</li> <li>• Used to lower inhibitions in preparation for sexual activity.</li> <li>• <b>Is a criminal offence in Queensland.</b></li> </ul> <p>Possible indicators (but not automatically grooming):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fear, dislike, discomfort or reluctance around a particular adult.</li> <li>• Repeated unacceptable behaviours.</li> <li>• Frequent, vague or implausible health complaints.</li> <li>• Unexplained gifts, particularly of high value.</li> <li>• Displaying harmful or problematic sexual behaviour.</li> </ul>

Grooming – Stages and Strategies	Disclosure variables - Children
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Identify the target</b> (most vulnerable/receptive person or families).</li> <li>2. <b>Gain trust</b> (be indispensable or significant).</li> <li>3. <b>Fill a need</b> (give the individual special status e.g. preferential treatment, sharing secrets, gifts).</li> <li>4. <b>Isolate the target</b> (physical or emotional).</li> <li>5. <b>Relationship is sexualised</b> (strategies used to desensitise person to sexual touch). At this point, criminal sexual abuse and exploitation are occurring.</li> <li>6. <b>Maintain control</b> (blame, threats, bribes).</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four variables – denial, recantation, reaffirmation, timing.</li> <li>• A child has chosen who they will disclose to, and what they will disclose to them.</li> <li>• Children are less likely to purposefully disclose they are being abused.</li> <li>• Disclosure can be a process, not necessarily an event.</li> <li>• Body language and words chosen when responding to disclosures have a profound and lasting impact.</li> </ul>

### Responding to Disclosure (Ministry Agent) – R.E.S.P.O.N.D

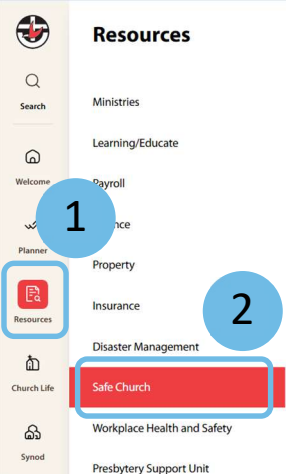
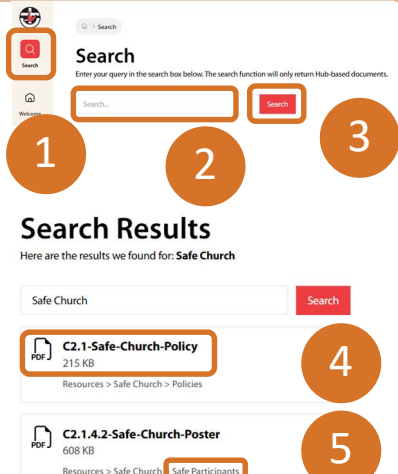
<b>R</b> <b>Reassure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassure the person – welcome the information and reaffirm they are doing the right thing by speaking up.</li> <li>• Listen calmly, patiently, and supportively.</li> <li>• Let the person or child use their own words.</li> <li>• Tell them what happened to them is not their own fault.</li> </ul>
<b>E</b> <b>Ensure</b> immediate danger is addressed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure immediate danger is addressed and call 000 if there is imminent danger.</li> <li>• Gently ask questions to assess, if not mentioned outright, however do not investigate officially.</li> <li>• Address concerns about their safety.</li> </ul>
<b>S</b> <b>Statement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make an internal report using the Speak Up! QR code or link.</li> <li>• Take comprehensive notes. Record to whom you have reported your concerns (internally and externally).</li> <li>• Do not investigate the situation.</li> </ul>
<b>P</b> <b>Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Plan</b> your next actions.</li> <li>• Complete <b>the reporting threshold tests</b> in <i>Mandatory Reporting for Ministry Agents</i> (appropriate actions, external reporting level).</li> </ul>
<b>O</b> <b>Obligation to report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You have Mandatory obligations to report under state legislation and Church policy.</li> <li>• Report internally, and if necessary externally to Queensland Police Service and/or Queensland Child Protection Authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>N</b> <b>Needs</b> for assistance or referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer support and referrals specific to their needs, using the Reporting and Referral Guide.</li> <li>• What does the person need to feel safe and be involved in the process?</li> <li>• What Pastoral Care is offered to the survivor?</li> <li>• What Pastoral Care is offered to the accused person (if within Church)?</li> </ul>
<b>D</b> <b>Debrief</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assist debriefing leaders/volunteers.</li> <li>• Debrief with trusted colleague or Presbytery Minister.</li> <li>• Maintain confidentiality.</li> <li>• Prioritise self-care.</li> </ul>

## Responding to Disclosure (Lay People) – B.C.A.L.M

<b>B</b>	<b>Breathe</b>	Use a quick calming technique and suggest the person ‘take a deep breath’.
<b>C</b>	<b>Calm the Person</b>	Stay focused on them and their story. Use words like “You’ve done the right thing by telling me” and “I believe you”.
<b>A</b>	<b>Assess immediate danger</b>	If life-threatening, call 000. Gently ask questions to assess if they are in danger.
<b>L</b>	<b>Let them know your obligations</b>	Manage expectations by identifying the steps that will occur, including obligation to report.
<b>M</b>	<b>Make a report</b>	Lay people are encouraged to report to their Ministry Agent or use internal reporting QR code/link.

Helping Survivors	Mandatory Reporting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People reach out to the church in times of need and vulnerability.</li> <li>People should be greeted with support and acceptance – leaves a lasting impact on their lives.</li> <li>Do everything in our power to minimise trauma.</li> <li>Make appropriate referrals for supportive therapies to promote resilience.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>External reporting required for actual or reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, grooming, domestic or family violence.</li> <li>Maintain the care and safety of people as priority.</li> <li>Wondering “What if I am wrong?” is valid and possible, but “What if I’m right?” and you fail to make a report due to your reservations?</li> <li>External agencies are equipped to investigate and decide if person is harmed and resulting actions.</li> </ul>
Bystander Effect	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Failure of a group of witnesses to respond to abuse.</li> <li>It is important to <b>take every report seriously</b>.</li> </ul>	

## Using the Hub to find Safe Church resources

All Safe Church resources	Go to <a href="http://hub.ucaql.com.au">hub.ucaql.com.au</a>	Search tool
 <p><b>Resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ministries</li> <li>Learning/Educate</li> <li>Welcome</li> <li>Payroll</li> <li>Finance</li> <li>Planner</li> <li>Property</li> <li>Insurance</li> <li>Disaster Management</li> <li><b>Safe Church</b></li> <li>Workplace Health and Safety</li> <li>Presbytery Support Unit</li> </ul>	<p><b>All Safe Church Resources</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On left side, hover over <b>resources</b>.</li> <li>Click on <b>Safe Church</b>.</li> <li>Click on the <b>sections</b> (listed along the top) to find the resources.</li> </ol> <p><b>Search Tool</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On the left side, click <b>search</b>.</li> <li>Type the <b>document code or name</b>.</li> <li>Click <b>search</b>.</li> <li>Browse documents and click on the one you are looking for.</li> <li>Alternatively, to find its overarching location, click in the <b>breadcrumbs</b>.</li> </ol>	 <p><b>Search</b></p> <p>Enter your query in the search box below. The search function will only return Hub-based documents.</p> <p><b>Search Results</b></p> <p>Here are the results we found for: <b>Safe Church</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>C2.1-Safe-Church-Policy</b> (215 KB)</li> <li><b>C2.1.4.2-Safe-Church-Poster</b> (608 KB)</li> </ul>

## Mandatory Reporting

- Please report even minor concerns using details below, or connecting with Synod Office Safe Church team.
- Keeps us all safe – not only in your own Congregation or Faith Community, but everyone across the Synod.



Report via [Online](#) / QR code / phone:

- Injury and Illness (WHS)** - (07) 3377 9870
- Abuse and neglect (Safe Church)** - (07) 3377 9983
- After Hours – urgent matters only** - (07) 3377 9706



**Injury – Illness – Abuse – Neglect – Boundary Violations – Hazards – Near Misses – Property Damage**

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